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Q8(b)**Critically evaluate the relevance of the cyclical theory of social change in understanding contemporary societies**

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2026 · Sociology GS 1 · 20 marks · Social Change in Modern Society

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Social Change in Modern Society: Sociological theories of social change; Development and dependency; Agents of social change; Education and social change; Science, technology and social change.

Facts & figures for this PYQ only.

Numbers move. Confirm the latest Budget, Economic Survey or census round.

The Decline of the West (Spengler)

Oswald Spengler's seminal work posited that cultures are self-contained organisms destined to pass through a predictable cycle of birth, maturity, and decay.

A Study of History (Toynbee)

Arnold Toynbee analysed twenty-one distinct civilisations, arguing that their survival depends on the quality of response to environmental and social challenges.

Treatise on General Sociology (Pareto)

Vilfredo Pareto introduced the concept of the 'circulation of elites', explaining political change through the psychological shifts in ruling classes.

Kondratiev Waves

Nikolai Kondratiev identified long-term capitalist economic cycles lasting 40 to 60 years, driven by technological innovations and structural shifts.

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